/101 cont./

764 of wine, known to the Miao as "dark night /?/" /hsiao yeh/ to show that both hosts and guests feel grateful and in harmony. After the offering by the son-in-law, the maternal uncle of
764 the deceased, customarily called hou ch'in or hou pei /"empress'
● 604 relative" or "empress' generation"/ also comes forth with a
605 pig's head to offer in sacrifice. After this ceremony is over, he also invites the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family and those on the maternal side who came with the maternal uncle to drink together. After the wine has been drunk, one of the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family or an eloquent elder of the village is asked to act as the go-between to request from the bereaved family huo-pa chiu /"torch wine"/. The huo-pa chiu consists of a certain number of chin of wine, a certain number of chin of meat, towels, and cloth. Those who go with the "empress' relative" each receive a towel and a certain number of ch'ih of cloth "for showing the way." The last item is necessary, but the others may be more or less given at discretion.

764 After the "empress' relative" has received the various
604 items of hou-pa chiu, he is charged with certain duties at the time of carrying the corpse to the grave. Before the procession he has to wrap the white cloth received over his body, wrap his head with a white towel and hold a straw sword with a white towel dangling from the handle. He has to stand before the coffin or before the main entrance, uttering several phrases of
[789] a magic formula, and then with the straw sword /102/ he knocks three times on the entrance, whereupon the procession
[754] can start off. Holding a fire stick in his hand, the sorcerer picks up the lamp bowl from under the coffin and places it upside down on the coffin, and after uttering spells, he shatters the bowl with the fire stick, and everyone immediately carries the coffin out the entrance. The "empress' relative" still wrapped in white cloth, a white towel on his head, holding a straw sword in his left hand and a torch in his right, marches in front of the coffin, and goes first, leading the way. The filial son in mourning and the mourners march, men before the

/102 cont./

coffin and the women behind it. The people who carry the coffin while on the way ask the deceased's son-in-law for wine to drink, without which they would not proceed. Arriving at the burial ground the "empress' relative" throws down the torch on the grave, and returns the grass sword to the host. The grave pit has already been dug by men sent ahead. Now they burn oiled hemp stalks, which is called "warming up the grave." A geomancer is on hand to mark out the eight diagrams /used in Chinese system of divination/ with rice at the bottom of the grave, and a cock is let down into the pit to peck at the rice, in order to divine the good and bad luck of the host's family. If the cock eats the rice on the left side, then the male members will have good luck, if on the right side, then the female members will have peace. If it eats in the center then both men and women will have luck. After the coffin is laid in the pit, the geomancer, holding a sheng of white, polished rice, stands at the head of the coffin and scatters the rice, making complimentary remarks. The mourning filial son and others kneel at the foot of the coffin, catch the rice in their clothes. After the burial, the geomancer holds a flat, called the "calling-back-the-soul flag," and leads the procession back, and when they arrive at the bereaved family's house, everyone puts a few grains of cooked rice in the mouth to avoid losing the soul. The sorcerer, carrying a bamboo tube full of water, stands at the junction of crossroads or at the main entrance and scatters water with a broom made of green grass, uttering spells, to get rid of the tainted air and to dispel evil spirits.

After returning from the grave and attending to the dispersal of all the relatives and friends from everywhere, the host then must provide a feast for the "torch wine and meat" men brought along by the "empress' relative." If after they have eaten again and again, the hospitality is still inadequate, often it may cause "other shoots to sprout /i.e. troubles/." and cause trouble for the host. After the meal, the paternal third cousin /?/ departs, but the "empress' relative" himself remains.

/102 cont./

765 After the funeral, on the day of Mao /of the traditional
756 calendar/, the bereaved family invites a sorcerer to the house
[787] to offer sacrifices to the deceased. A table is set, on which
are laid bowls of meat and cups of wine. The sorcerer burns
[787] yellow wax, beats bamboo tubes, and utters spells. When the
sorcerer's hands suddenly begin to shake without stopping, the
members of the family think that the deceased has come back,
and they all burst out in loud weeping. In the fifth night watch
765 they offer mi-pa to the honorable deceased, which somewhat
[782] resembles the Chinese custom of hui sha /"warding off noxious
[177] influences"/. After this the maternal uncle about to depart,
ask the host family for personalthings left, such as the deceased's
604 clothes, shoes, socks, and bed sheets. If the dead person was
[768] a woman, he asks for the marriage portion and the amount
received depends upon the financial condition of the host
family.

766 From very early times the Miao have had tribes but not
756 tribal chiefs, and therefore they do not have different classes
[565] nor differentiated marriage or funeral ceremonial customs.
The funeral for a Miao sorcerer, however, is slightly different
from that for the ordinary person. When a sorcerer is at the
point of death, /103/ two other sorcerer priests are summoned
to the house. When he breathes his last, the members of the
family must not weep. One sorcerer priest climbs on the house
and removes a few tiles from it to make an opening, which
is called "opening the heaven's gate." The other sorcerer
priest sits below behind the deceased, and as soon as he sees
"heaven's gate" has been opened, he immediately lets out a
loud cry, to which the one on the roof responds with another
cry, and thus, the two men, one above and the other below,
start their ritual. It is said that the one above opens heaven's
gate, and the one below shuts the grove /literally, "earth
storehouse"/. This is to cause the departed sorcerer not to
enter hell but to ascend to heaven. After this the family mem-
bers may begin to cry and weep.